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HIDDEN YET POSSESSED

Cap I *TREASURES: HIDDEN YET POSSESSED*

IT is not unfrequently urged by earnest and devout Christians, as an objection against the doctrine of Sanctification through faith, that holy men in former times do not seem to have held it. And that therefore, since the teaching set forth so prominently and definitely in these days was not the teaching of God's saints in the years that are past, it follows as a necessary inference that it cannot be true —it cannot be accepted as Scriptural.

But is this objection altogether sound or just? What do we learn from the history

of Christian doctrine in the ages that have elapsed since the days of the Apostles? Or, to take a more limited range, say from the time of the Reformation. If we apply such a test—if we refuse to accept any doctrines that were not held or taught by the leaders of Christianity during the last three hundred years, we shall find that many of the most precious *aspects* of truth would have to be excluded from our creed.

Let us hear the testimony of one well qualified to form an opinion on this important subject, and one who is justly highly esteemed in the Church :—

"At the Reformation there was a return to the Scriptural and Apostolic doctrine of faith, but not to the Scriptural and Apostolic doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ. The Reformers did not enter into the *historical* character of Scripture; their whole attention was absorbed by its dogmatic aspect. The question of individual salvation was their great and

momentous topic, the false mediations between Christ and the sinner the great object of their attack. But the question of the position of the Church in the history of the world, of the relation of the Church to Israel and to the coming kingdom, scarcely came within their horizon.

"Nor need we be astonished at this. If we review the history of the Church, we notice how many important truths, clearly revealed in Scripture, have been allowed to lie dormant for centuries, unknown and unappreciated, except by a few isolated Christians, until it pleased God to enlighten the Church by chosen witnesses, and to bestow on His children *the knowledge of hidden and forgotten treasures.*

"For centuries the doctrine of *salvation by grace through faith only, was not known and preached in Christendom.* We read but of few, who, in the darkness of prevailing ignorance, knew and declared this great truth. For how long a period, even after the Reformation, *was the doc*

trine of the Holy Ghost, and His work in conversion, and His indwelling in the believer, almost unknown! Christians thought little and vaguely, and spoke still less, on this great doctrine. And thus was it with the doctrine of Christ's Second Coming. Clearly revealed in Scripture, held with ardour and joy by the Apostolic Christians and the primitive Church, it was forgotten and forsaken as the Church became worldly and corrupted by pagan influences; and only since the labours of the devout and learned Bengel and his school, has there been a most extensive and blessed revival of this great and central truth." *

The Spirit-taught believer to whom Christ has become something far more than his justification—who, subsequent to his conversion, has had unveiled to his soul by the Holy Ghost, Christ as his Sanctification—will be greatly helped by

* Extract from Dr. Saphir's Lectures on the Lord's Prayer.

these facts of Church history. It will help him to understand how that which is true of the Church may be true of individuals. It is quite possible to see clearly some sides of Divine truth, and yet be in much darkness concerning other sides which are equally vital and important.

Thank God there are evident tokens of a very general awakening, in this our own day, touching the possibilities of grace and of faith in the matter of holy living. The Church is beginning to apprehend more clearly than in days past what are her resources, wherein they consist, and how they are to be appropriated, if believers are to live in the full enjoyment and manifestation of their privileges.

We believe the doctrine of Sanctification through faith has been "allowed to lie dormant" (it may be) "for centuries, unknown and unappreciated except by a few isolated Christians." We believe the great truth of Christ made of God unto us Sanctification has in times past been "forgotten

and lost sight of"—and that now in this our own day God is bringing home to the hearts of His people the reality and blessedness of these great truths with a view of making the Bride ready for the Bridegroom's return.

All these treasures are there, already bestowed upon us in Christ; but to how many are they hidden and unknown, though in a sense they are possessed by every believing soul! It is the office of the Spirit to unveil them to our spiritual vision. Then we shall appropriate and experience them. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10).

Cap 2

HOW TO KNOW THE TRUTH

TO know God's truth is closely associated with doing God's will. And yet it is possible to separate these two things in such a way, that we may be seeking to understand doctrine without an honest intention of following God's commands.

"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John vii. 17). That is: if it be any man's will to do God's will—if any man is minded to obey, he shall know of the doctrine—he shall have no difficulty in understanding what God has to teach him. Difficulties touching knowledge will be removed

when unwillingness touching obedience is laid aside.

These words of our Lord meet two classes of people very unlike each other. There are those, for instance, who seek light, who are earnestly striving to arrive at the knowledge of the truth. But for some cause or other they have missed the way. They have sought it by mental effort, or they have looked for it through the emotions. To such these words of our Lord are especially suited. In order to "know of the doctrine," something more is needed than a clear brain, or an emotional frame of mind—there must be a surrendered will.

Then there are those who plead the difficulties of revelation as an excuse for their impenitence. They say, How can I believe when there are so many contradictions? Get rid of these, and I am ready to become a disciple. Now, the principle our Lord here enunciates cuts at the root of this objection. You ob-

serve He just reverses the order, for He says, in effect, the difficulties will disappear when you are willing to obey.

The truth of revelation appeals to more than one part of our being. It appeals to our will, as well as to our intellect and our affections. The religion of Christ is not a matter of thought or of feeling only, but of submission, and of life, and of obedience. The force of the statement lies, therefore, in the moral harmony of the man's purpose with the will of God, so far as that will is known or felt. If there be no sympathy, there can be no understanding.

The spirit of obedience is the condition of knowing the truth. Not that God's will must be *done* before we can know the doctrine. Not that there must be a life of obedience before we can receive the saving truths of the Gospel. That is not the teaching of our Lord's words. But that there must be a *willingness* to obey, an attitude of readiness to do, if we

would receive the light of His truth. Knowledge itself, without submission, would not conform us to the image of Christ. It would make us more like Satan. Therefore the first and chief requisite is a spirit of humble submission —a will wholly yielded to do God's will.

As to knowledge, the word is used in various senses. There are different kinds of knowledge. Our knowledge may be *an intuition.* There is such a thing as natural knowledge. We read, for instance, "Ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." No supernatural light is needed to know this. No argument is needed to prove it. It is a self-evident truth. Again, our knowledge may be *an inference.* We attain that knowledge by the exercise of our logical faculty. It is something that we arrive at by the process of reasoning.

We may see the conclusion to which we have arrived clearly and distinctly, and yet it exercises little or no influence

on our lives. That knowledge is most important in its place, but it is not enough for practical godliness. Lastly, our knowledge may be *a demonstration*. This is spiritual knowledge. The Holy Ghost is necessary to impart this knowledge. "My speech and my preaching," said St. Paul to the Corinthians, "was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, . . . neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14).

This is a knowledge that meets the deep needs of our inner consciousness. It both convinces and satisfies the heart and conscience. It carries with it the stamp of Divine authority. No argument is needed to assure us of its truth. In

the full sense of that word we can now say with the Apostle, "we *know*." It is not a natural intuition, or a logical inference, but an actual demonstration of the Spirit of God in our souls. It is said that Richard Baxter, in reviewing his life, related that in his early years the miraculous evidences for Christianity influenced him most; in his middle life, the prophetic and historical; but in his later years, the fitness of Christianity to meet all the needs of his being was to him the most convincing evidence.

Cap 3

"FOLLOW THOU ME" *

THE Lord's command to each of His disciples. We have heard His voice saying "Come unto Me," and now He says, "Follow thou Me."

Notice how COMPREHENSIVE is this command. It includes every other requirement and precept of the Gospel, and it calls into action every power and faculty of our renewed being.

It means *heart-work*. This is no mere external compliance, no mere outward conformity to our blessed Master's will It is the service of the heart. The force that is brought to bear on the disciple is not that of compulsion, but of attraction. "*Draw* me, and we will run after Thee"

* John xxi. 22.

(Cant. i. 4). No man can follow Christ whose heart has not been won by Him. "Whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient *from the heart* to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered" (Rom. vi. 17, R.V.). It is not the terrors of the law nor the fear of a judgment to come that enables us to respond to this command. It is the attraction of Divine love that is the power. The Lord Himself must be the loadstone of our hearts.

It means *faith-work*. Because following is often like stepping out on the unseen. It is often like walking on the water. We could never venture out without a Divine warrant. But He who granted it to Peter when He said "Come!" gives us the same warrant when through the darkness and the trial He says, "Follow thou Me." This needs the courage of faith. Without faith we could not take a single step, for it is an impossible walk except to him that believeth. The stepping-stones of

faith are the promises of God. "But supposing I have no faith," says one; "what am I to do?" Don't think of *believing* at all. Think of *Him* who bids you follow Him. Hearken to His voice. In other words, listen to His written Word: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. x. 17).

It means *will-work*. That is, our wills must be in this following, or it means nothing. All true obedience begins, not in the outward action, but in the inward spring of all activity; that is, in the will We must *will* to do His will, if we would follow Christ. We become obedient *within*, before we are obedient in the outward act.

The moment for action may not have arrived, but the time for willing to be obedient is always present. Here we see the great value of what is called the "after-meeting" in connection with Conventions for the Deepening of Spiritual Life. They are really "meetings for decision," as our French brethren call them

Such seasons are especially useful, because they are times when, being brought face to face with obligations neglected, offences committed, or evil habits formed, we have to respond to our Lord's call, "Follow thou Me." "Follow Me in doing the right thing, though it may cost you personal humiliation. Follow Me in loving the brethren, though your efforts may be despised. Follow Me in your separation not only from every evil way, but from ways which in themselves may not be evil, but which may cause any brother to stumble." And the *beginning* of an obedient response to our Lord's command lies in the will—at that moment of silent waiting upon Him, when we have asked Him to search us and deliver us from all evil. The act of decision is no mere sentimental emotion. Nothing can be more practical. It means such a complete coming over of the inner man on to the Lord's side, as has its issue in a calm but firm course of obedient action. The point of contro-

versy is now settled, the conflict is over, the battle has been won, and the Lord is victorious over the soul that had hitherto been more or less in an attitude of resistance. The Holy Spirit now comes as a witness of God's delight in us; and a holy calm fills the soul, assuring us that "He is able" to make us faithful and to keep us loyal.

But is it not DIFFICULT? This following of the Lord is not an easy matter. True, when viewed from the human side. There are the efforts of our great spiritual adversary. He is constantly on the watch with a view of hindering God's children in their progress.

But this, let us never forget, is not without God's permission. It is His will that our following of Him should be, not apart from obstacles, but in the midst of them, in spite of them.

There are *alluring attractions*—earthly objects and pursuits that appeal to our natural inclinations. Some of them are

perfectly harmless in themselves, but when they are yielded to, we discover afterwards that they have lowered our spiritual tone, and robbed us of our strength. And so we have been impeded in our progress.

Then there are *perplexing problems*. Perhaps we are troubled as we look around upon the sufferings of our fellow-creatures. We think of the multitudes living in darkness and degradation, not only in heathen lands, but in our own Christian England. We are unable to fathom the mysteries these questions suggest. Or, it may be, we are perplexed by the objections of sceptics to the truth of Holy Scripture. We are unable to find an answer to these things. What is the remedy? Look to the Master, who says, "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me." We must rest in His wisdom, we must confide in His faithfulness, and without waiting to question or to speculate, we must be prompt in our obedience, and follow Him.

Then there are *distracting cares*—the

things that belong to the ordinary business of daily life. Some of these are very common matters, and perhaps very trivial, but God's children, when they carry them, find them a serious hindrance to their progress.

It is quite possible to be so overburdened by care that we cease to follow Christ. We must learn the secret of *committing* all into His hands daily if we would know what it is to follow the Lord fully.

Lastly, it is POSSIBLE. Yes, granted that it is difficult—nay, we would go further, that it is to us impossible—to follow the Lord, it is, under certain conditions, blessedly possible. After all, difficulty is a relative term. It all depends upon the extent of the power you have available. Difficulty diminishes as the power increases, and altogether vanishes when the power rises to omnipotence. "Our sufficiency is of God." All God's biddings are enablings. Always provided that we are on the lines

of God's written Word, in the current of His revealed purpose, there is nothing you may not trust Him for. "According to your faith it shall be unto you." "All things are possible unto God," and "all things are possible unto him that believeth." Outside of Christ—apart from Him—even the Christian can "do nothing"; but "in Him" he "can do all things."

We need not trouble about the power—as to whether the supply will be sufficient, or as to whether it will continue to flow—so long as our hearts are set on following Him, and so long as we are in the line of His will. We may feel very weak, conscious of nothing in the way of personal ability, and yet we may trust without a doubt—we may step out without a fear—and we shall find that all our need will be filled to the full, and that His strength is made perfect in our weakness.

Cap 4 "SO THE LORD ALONE DID LEAD HIM"

THAT little word "so" suggests the question *how?* How did the Lord lead Israel? "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him" (Deut. xxxii. 11, 12). We see then that the leading begins with the awakening of our spiritual energies. By arousing us out of our carnal ease, by stirring up the conscience to a sense of duty, by the attractions of new possibilities, by the assurance of sustaining strength—by all these methods the Lord brings us into His leading. He arouses us out of the conventional groove of an easy-going life,

into a course of active and definite witness for Him, and into a deeper experience of His love and grace and power.

What a privilege to be living a life of which it can be said with truth, "The Lord alone did lead him"! There are lessons to be learnt at the beginning of a life of Divine guidance.

First, we have to learn how to *wait* upon God. There is an immense amount of impatience, naturally, in every believer's heart. This is the reason of the restlessness that so many feel and manifest when God calls them to endure suffering, or to pass through trial. There can be no progress where there is impatience. We have to "run with patience," and not merely with alacrity. It is often more easy to rush on in haste, than it is to wait patiently for the Lord. But Divine guidance is inseparable from God's time. "Mine hour is not yet come," said our Lord. He knew that the only path for Him was the path that not only had the way Divinely

defined, but the hour of each step Divinely fixed. To wait upon the Lord is to learn what is God's time, as well as what is God's way.

Then we have to learn *not to hesitate* when God requires immediate obedience. Nothing is more common than the habit of hesitating to act to-day because we are waiting for the light we shall need to-morrow. God always gives enough light for the next step—if it is His will that we should step out rather than continue to wait on Him.

When Saul of Tarsus cried with a convicted heart, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" he was about to enter the path of God's leading. It is instructive to notice how the light came to him. Did the Lord at once reveal to him the whole programme, so to speak, of His will? No; at first He gave him only a limited portion of light. It was sufficient only for a very few steps. "Arise, and go into the city." Not further than this point

was it clear to Saul what it was the Lord would have him to do—"Go into the city." "But, Lord, let me know what will happen after this. Reveal to me what Thy purpose is concerning me." He did not ask this, because the Lord had said, "It shall be told thee what thou must do." And yet how many of God's children to-day are refusing to "Arise and go," because they are waiting to see their way many miles ahead along the road, before they venture to make a start.

Further light will not come until present duty is acted upon. "It shall be told thee," when thou hast stepped out to the very margin of the light He gives thee to-day, "what thou must do" to-morrow. This is the principle of the Lord's leading. It teaches us that faith is needed as much in the middle, and at the end of the course, as at the beginning.

Then let us note it must be "the Lord *alone*" that is to lead us. Sometimes we are betrayed into the impossible experi-

ment of trying to follow two guides at one and the same time—the Lord and the world. It is not "the Lord alone." Then at other times we follow the Lord only for a while: other leaders come in and take His place. It is not "the Lord *alone*" *always*. The true leader of our lives is always that one who has the pre-eminence over the whole of our being. "O Lord our God, other lords beside Thee have had dominion over us: but by Thee only will we make mention of Thy name." If we would seek a walk of implicit obedience, of faithful following, let us begin by enthroning Christ as Lord in our hearts. Let Him *alone* have the government of our souls—let Him have the pre-eminence in all things.

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with Mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose trappings must be bit and bridle to hold them in, else they will not come near unto thee" (Ps. xxxii. 9, R.V.).

Cap 5 THE PROMISE AND THE COMMAND

THE generality of Christians find more encouragement and consolation in the *promises* than in the *commands* of God. But it is an evidence of greater enlightenment and of a stronger faith, when we can recognise as much grace in the one as in the other.

The truth is, while the promise is the warrant of our faith, the command is a test of its reality. God does not give us His promises simply that we should cling to them as promises, having reference to the future only; but that we should act on them in the present. We have a striking illustration of this principle in the case of Martha at the grave of her

brother Lazarus. We have in that touching incident an example of the way in which the Lord deals with His children to-day by means of promise and command. The story, related in the eleventh chapter of St. John's Gospel, is familiar to us all. What our Lord means by faith comes out in those words of tender rebuke which He speaks to the sorrowing sister: "Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God?" This seems almost to suggest that Martha was not a believer. But a glance at this chapter shows this was not the case. She was a remarkable believer. "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." This was no ordinary faith. It implies that she was convinced He had the power to stay the hand of death. "But I know that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." *Even now*, after that corruption had set in, she believed that He could raise her brother to life

again. This was wonderful faith. Then notice how intelligent it was. Her words remind us of Peter's confession: "Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." How clear and distinct is her view of His Messiahship! And yet it was to this believing disciple that Christ spoke in the words: "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest *believe*"—implying that at that moment she was not believing. Her faith had come to a standstill, so to speak. How and where had she failed? Had she suddenly changed her creed? No, it was not now a question of soundness of doctrine, but simply of obedience. The Lord Jesus had given her a promise which she too readily concluded she believed. That promise had neither been thoroughly understood by her, nor intelligently grasped. And now, when He gives her a command, she actually refuses to obey it. What was the promise, and what was the command?

The promise was—"Thy brother shall rise again." Martha put her own construction on these words. She did not seek to know whether our Lord was speaking of the distant future or of the present. Had she ascertained that point, what gladness and hope, what joy and faith would have filled her soul! There is a touch of impatience in her words, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

But, as we see from the event, our Lord was referring to what He was about to do, there and then, in raising him from that grave.

Not entering into her Lord's mind touching the promise, she was not prepared for the Lord's requirement in the command: "Take ye away the stone." It was because she interposed her own wisdom, and hesitated to obey, that the rebuke was given, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" To

believe the promise was to obey the command.

Thus we see God's commands are the tests of our faith. We may ascertain how much our faith in His promises is worth by the response we give to His commands.

For every stage of their spiritual journey there is in God's Word a promise that exactly fits into His children's need, however trying their circumstances may be. And side by side with the promise there is a command, that may be said to belong to the promise, and which should be taken in conjunction with it.

The blessings which are contained in these promises not only pertain to glory, but to grace; not only to the life that is to come, but to that which now is. Too often we fail to take in their true import. Too often we regard them as belonging to the distant future. We do not enter into God's mind about them. We do not give ourselves time to grasp their fulness and

sufficiency in supplying the need of the present. Hence we do not expect their fulfilment; and when the command comes which assumes the realization of the promise, we fail to obey it. Our Lord's command to take away the stone assumed the certainty of the promise—"Thy brother shall rise again." While, therefore, we grasp the promises of God, let us not forget to discover the commands that belong to them. Let us seek to know the true meaning of the promises. Let us give ourselves time prayerfully to take in their import in all their present application, and let us grasp them simply but firmly, and step out confidently expecting their fulfilment. The command, when it comes, will not then take us by surprise. Our faith will then be prepared to respond to it in prompt and implicit obedience.



Cap 6

DIVINE POWER INSTEAD OF SELF-ENERGY

WHAT men call goodness is that which lies in specific deeds and in outward acts. They would begin and end with these. But to be taught of God is to be brought to that which lies beneath mere actions, important and necessary as they are. The root of every true action is found in the principle and motive that prompted it. It is something beneath the surface. It is that which has to do with the inner condition of the man.

When God brings us into His school, He is continually surprising us by the singular lessons we have to learn. We discover, too, that time has to be spent in *un*learning, as well as in learning. Not only have the outward actions to undergo a change ; the sources of our

activity have to be tested, in order that we may be sure that our deeds are "wrought in God," and are not the outcome of mere human enthusiasm or carnal energy.

Our practical life is not to consist of disconnected impulses—however excellent these activities, in themselves, may be. What is needed is an underlying permanent condition of godliness—a certain interior disposition, a frame of the soul—where the "heart is fixed," and the whole trend of our being is Godward. "Christian character," it has been well said, "is not a mosaic of moralities, nor a compilation of merits, nor a succession of acts, nor an aggregate of amiabilities." It is the outcome of an interior vitality, of an organizing force, which brings every faculty of the man into captivity to Christ. He must be enthroned as the Lord within. We have therefore not only to change our actions, but to "exchange our strength." It is when we wait on the

Lord that we learn this great and soul-transforming lesson. The power of God instead of the strength of self-energy. It is at the point where our actions have their spring that the most important reformation is to take place. *Being* must come before *doing*. A right frame of mind, a true attitude of soul, is the first and all-essential condition of a right course of action.

Our hardest lessons consist often in removing the cause of our past failures. We have striven to correct the mistakes of action without going down to the spring of those actions. We have lopped off the branches, but the root has remained unchanged. Until we exchange our strength, that is, let God occupy the place that self now usurps, failure, defeat, and exhaustion are sure to follow. We have assumed that the evil lay somewhere on the surface. We have supposed that it can easily be remedied. But in spite of repeated efforts and resolutions to do better, the evil

has continued and discouragement has followed.

Divine power cannot be realized where Divine purity is not honestly welcomed. "Blessed are the pure in heart." That is the region where God's holiness and strength are to reign. That which is to be seen without, in the outward life, must first of all exist within, in the inner life. Cleansing and strength come with the Christ who seeks to take up His permanent abode in our hearts. "He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."

Hence, we see that there is nothing more practical than those truths which relate to the *sources* of action. They are every whit as practical as the actions themselves. The branch is not more practical to the tree than the root. In our zeal to maintain the fruits of righteousness on the branch, let us never lose sight of, but keep continually and steadily before us, the absolute necessity of health and vigour and life in the root.

Cap 7

NATURAL, SPIRITUAL, CARNAL

IN the opening portion of his first epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle refers to these three distinct conditions. He speaks of the "Natural man" (1 Cor. ii. 14), the "Spiritual" (v. 15), and the "Carnal" (1 Cor. iii. 1, 2).

The natural is the unregenerate man. In such a one the human spirit is latent and inactive. He is one in whom the soul overbears the spirit, which latter is without the Holy Ghost. This is not the only state in which the unregenerate man can be. There is a lower type still, namely, the animal, where the soul is the slave to the body. But the natural, though unregenerate, is the highest condition a man can attain without the Holy

Ghost. Such a one may be moral, intellectual, cultured, refined, but he cannot be spiritual.

Before the Holy Ghost has come to him, before he is born from above, his human spirit is simply an organ, rather than a power.

Or, as Professor Godet puts it, "Before the coming of the Divine Spirit, the spirit in man is rather an aspiration," or, as De Wette says, "A receptivity, rather than a power or a life."

The natural man is not the man who is a slave to his animal appetites. It is the man in whom the *soul* is dominant. He may be a moralist of the highest type. He may be a giant in intellect, as were some of the heathen philosophers—but he is quite incapable of discerning spiritual truths. And so it is written, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

In striking contrast to that condition is the "spiritual man." He is one who has not only been born of the Spirit—whose human spirit has been quickened and brought into union with God—but who is possessed and controlled by that Spirit. The difference between these two conditions is great and radical.

But there is another contrast—not as between death and life, or as between the unsaved and saved; but as between Christians and Christians.

There are those whom the Apostle calls "carnal." The word may suggest to us a very low condition, morally and spiritually. It is a term that seems scarcely applicable to Christians at all. But it is of such that the Apostle uses it. He says, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto *carnal*, even as unto babes in Christ." We see from this that carnal Christians were those who were at a very low stage in the Divine life. This is very instructive, as showing us that re-

generation alone is not sufficient to ensure a healthy spiritual condition. We may have been born of the Spirit, as these Corinthian converts had been, and yet we may have made little or no advance in the spiritual life. We may have remained almost stationary.

Carnal Christians are those who cannot discern truths beyond the very elements of the Gospel. They cannot receive the meat of the Word, but only the milk of the Gospel (Heb. v. 12-14). The Apostle evidently thought it was time for them to have gone beyond that point, though they had been converted only about five or six years. Carnal Christians are easily influenced by men or human instruments, by outward circumstances, and are easily overcome by trial and temptation. There were envyings and strife and divisions among them. These things revealed their real condition. It is the mark of Christians at this stage that self in its various forms is constantly to the front.

It is true that all Christians must first be babes in Christ — and in that sense must pass through the carnal, before they can reach the spiritual. But the Apostle censures them, because instead of advancing, they had continued in that condition.

Now, as we look at these truths in connection with ourselves, do we not see that this is precisely the blessing that so many of us need, namely, to be raised from the carnal to the spiritual?

Let us begin by recognising the reality and Divine personality of the Holy Ghost —that He has come to our souls to make us His dwelling-place. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" These words were addressed by the Apostle to these carnal Christians. Let Him possess and control the whole man. It is only as He is supreme within us that we can have the mind of Christ, and become spiritual.



Cap 8

CONFESSING CHRIST

A FEW words about witnessing for Christ may be helpful to some of our readers. It is a matter about which many feel great difficulty—how to confess Christ in the daily life. We are conscious that we live in a world that knows Him not—a world that looks upon a life that is really in earnest as more or less akin to fanaticism, and regards spiritual truths generally as so much mysticism. The unseen world has no reality to those who are strangers to the work of the Holy Ghost.

To witness for Christ amongst those who know nothing of the saving power of the Gospel is a work that cannot be

taken up lightly. We soon discover that we need something more than human wit and natural gifts in order to be wise in winning souls.

Many are tempted to compromise, from a fear lest by a too strict adherence to the principles which seemed to have guided Christians in Apostolic days, they drive away people altogether out of the sphere of their influence. "They say," to quote the words of an able writer, who shows the folly of pandering to the spirit of the age, "let us not be too strict in our social regulations, or too rigid in our religious observances. For, granting that the stricter way has some advantages in the New Testament view, it will repel the sympathies of those we want to conciliate. Our desire is to gain men to our side. If we soften down the stern sanctions of God's law; if we muffle its threatening thunders; if we turn the sharp edge of that Sword of the Spirit which says, 'He that believeth shall be saved, and he that

believeth not shall be damned'; if we set aside our devout scruples when we are with men of the world, and omit our prayers, or let in a good share of Mammon into the conversation and keeping of the Lord's day; if we talk loosely with loose people, and trim our opinions to the breath that blows at the moment; if we stay away from God's house to please the guests that visit us, or the host that we visit, or the company we meet—why, we shall only do all this hoping to gain larger numbers to religion."

But, as it has been well said by the same writer in answer to this temporizing course, "You never turn worldly men or women to the City of God by going half way with them to Vanity Fair."

We often suppose the people whom we are desirous to influence are worse than they are. We assume that the mention of Christ will arouse them to anger. But how often it has been found when the confession of Him has been heartfelt, and

in the spirit of humility, there has been really no opposition at all! Beneath the surface of an apparent indifference there has been a readiness to know the secret of a better life. Hearts that are aching and weary of the world have been found under the cover of a cold exterior, only waiting to be told of all that the living Christ can do and be to the souls of men.

We are often so afraid of offending and driving people away from us, that we say absolutely nothing about Him whom we profess to serve. Of course it is not only by speaking that we have to confess Christ before men. What tells more than anything is a life of steady consistency—a life in which the likeness of the Master is seen. The words that come from the lips of such a one carry with them a special force. They are felt to be no vain boast—no mere parade of religion—but the outcome of a real union with Him who is the Fountain of Life.

Here, too, is the secret of that courage

which is undoubtedly needed for this difficult work. This courage is not mere natural boldness, which may belong simply to the temperament. Some are constitutionally courageous. This is not the courage that is needed in order to confess Christ before men. Some, on the other hand, are constitutionally timid, and yet by a simple trust in Christ they have become courageous. All their fears have vanished. "Out of weakness" they have been "made strong," and this "by faith." Here is the courage that overcomes—it is the courage of faith. "As seeing Him who is invisible."

How real and precious was Christ to the early martyrs! How persuaded they were of the supernatural power of His gospel! It is the same grace that has given courage to all who have since then witnessed a good confession. We have heard of Bernard Palissy, a poor mechanic, who knew and loved his Saviour. He had been thrown into the old Bastile, in

St. Bartholomew days, for his Protestantism. Charles IX. came to visit him, and threatened him with these words:—"Palissy, I am forced to give you up to death, unless you renounce your religion." "Forced!" answered the triumphant prisoner; "they that force you, King Charles, cannot force me. I can die; and so I am free. But you and all your nation cannot compel me, simple potter as I am, to bend my knee to an idol, or a lie."

To confess Christ we need wisdom, patience, gentleness, that we do not add, through our own unthinking zeal, to the "offence" that of necessity belongs to "the cross." But in addition to this we need above all a clearer view of the Lord Himself, a deeper conviction of His power to save, and we need also that spirit of self-sacrifice which is ready "to spend and be spent" in the Master's service.



Cap 9

"*MOSES . . . REFUSED*"

WE may test our own spiritual condition by the example of Moses, as it is referred to in Hebrews xi. 24. The life of the believer should be considered not only in relation to the things which he has to accept—the gift of God, and the fulness of grace in Christ—but also in relation to the things which in the course of his earthly journey he has continually to *refuse*. His spiritual condition may be tested by the way in which he acts when he comes under the alluring influences of the world, or is in any way brought under the power of temptation. Moses' decision of character is seen here, in that,

when exposed to the most ensnaring influences, the prospect of a brilliant earthly career, he did not waver or hesitate in his choice, but at once "*refused* to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Wealth, refinement, ease, pleasure, and power, were all within his grasp. But he saw what they would involve; how that they were inseparable from a state of estrangement from God. Viewing the whole situation from the standpoint of a Divinely illuminated conscience, he comes at once to this decision.

Observe how the conduct of Moses at this critical point of his life is regarded in Scripture. It is referred to in the Epistle to the Hebrews as *an act of faith.* How often faith and action are spoken of as if they were opposed! As if trusting and acting occupied opposite poles. And yet in the eleventh of Hebrews, faith is illustrated not by abstract doctrines or inner experiences, but by practical action. That chapter is a record of glorious *deeds.*

And what these Old Testament worthies accomplished, they are here declared to have accomplished by *faith*.

One of the chief features of Moses' character is here put before us: "Moses *refused*." That implies a strong temptation, impelling him to accept—influences operating in such a way that it was by no means easy to the natural man to refuse! God was testing him, and by that test preparing him for higher service. Moses, by God's grace, stood the test. His mind seems to have been thoroughly made up. He refused the prospect of princely magnificence—he rose superior to the temptation; and this, we are told, because he acted by faith.

This power to refuse is often the one thing lacking in the life of some of the truest of God's children. In our journey through life we are continually being tested in this way. We are constantly finding ourselves in circumstances where we have to make the choice to accept or to refuse

On the one side everything appealing to our natural inclinations would impel us to accept: on the other, the claims of God, the honour of His name, and our truest spiritual welfare, require us to refuse. We have to say either "yes," or "no." It is an evidence of a healthy condition of soul when the right decision is given without hesitation or ambiguity.

How many to-day are suffering acutely from the consequences of their own vacillation at a critical moment in their life, when it was clearly their duty at once to refuse! They lacked the moral courage or decision to say "no."

But what was the secret of Moses' decision? We have the answer to this in the words that follow (Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26):—"Moses . . . refused . . . choosing . . . esteeming . . . seeing Him," etc. There is a natural sequence, if not a logical connection, between these acts of faith. To see this, let us take the last first, "As seeing Him

who is invisible." God was to him a reality. Not a mere abstraction, but a distinct personality. Not One afar off, but close at hand. By faith he saw God. How essential is this to-day—the grace of a clear vision. Let anything dim your vision, and at once you are exposed to countless dangers. Live in His presence, walk before Him, "as seeing Him who is invisible," and you need fear no evil. But more than this, here is the secret of forming a right judgment—of coming to a right conclusion touching the comparative value of things. So we read, "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." He would never have come to that conclusion had he not viewed things in the light of God's presence—had he not walked by faith. Then came the act of choice. A right estimate leads to a right choice. And in proportion to the clearness of the vision, and of our sense of the preciousness of spiritual realities, so will be the

promptness of our choice, and the strength of our decision.

It is as we are decided in choosing, that we have no difficulty in refusing. Choose the good, and you will be enabled to refuse the evil, however attractively it may be presented to you.

The secret of failure in yielding to the evil instead of renouncing it may thus be traced up to the lack of constant communion with God. This is the great and essential condition of all holiness of life—seeing God by faith, and walking in close fellowship with Him. A clear spiritual vision, with nothing between the soul and God to cast a shadow on the path, is absolutely essential to continuance in the path of safety and peace.

Let this be sought at the beginning of each day, and maintained through the course of it. It will secure the other privileges already noticed, namely, a true *estimate* of the riches of Christ, and a habit of *choosing* according to the mind and will

of God. Courage and decision to *refuse* will not then be wanting.

All this implies a spirit of humble vigilance, of prayerful dependence, of conscious weakness, and yet of cheerful and confident expectation—a mind that is fully persuaded that what God has promised He is able also to perform.



Cap 10

HOW TO "WITHSTAND"

THE tests of Christian character are not always of the same kind. Sometimes they come to us in the form of allurement, appealing not only to that within us which is evil, but to that which in itself is not evil. They may appeal to that which is best within us, to satisfy lawful appetites by unlawful means. Such was Satan's appeal when he said to our Lord after He had fasted forty days, "Command that these stones be made bread."

But sometimes they come to us in the form of subtle suggestions, to lead us to doubt—assaults on the very foundation of our faith. It is important that we should

know how to endure at such times; how to "withstand," and "having done all, to stand," in these seasons of real peril.

Our duty sometimes is to "refuse," as Moses did, when he was tempted by all that the world counts attractive and desirable. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, *refused* to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Heb. xi. 23–26). As we observed in the last chapter, the secret of such refusal lay in the power of a counter-attraction. He had chosen the "greater riches," because he had been brought to realize their surpassing worth and attractiveness. If we have to make our choice between two objects set before us, and if the choice of the one involves the rejection of the

other, it is never really difficult to decide on that one which we know to be surpassingly superior to the other. The vision Moses had of eternal realities was clear, hence his sense of their worth was deep and adequate. Esteeming them "greater riches than the treasures in Egypt," he did not hesitate in choosing them; and in choosing them, he was enabled to "refuse" all that which appealed to the natural desires, and was bound up with a condition of alienation from God.

But on other occasions we are called upon not so much to "refuse" as to "withstand." The test is not an appeal to our natural inclinations, but an assault on our spiritual position. It comes now not to allure, but to alarm. Its aim is the destruction of all confidence in the unseen, the undermining of the rest of our faith in the invisible God. At one time it is the world that tries us, coming with all its blandishments with a view to leading

us away captive. At another it is the great enemy of souls who, with all his terrors, would shake the very citadel of our faith, or would, by his subtilty, draw us out of our fortress into a direct personal struggle with himself, and so easily overcome us.

Even when the "flesh" is being effectually counteracted by the Spirit, or Holy Ghost within us, so that we walk in the path of continuous deliverance from it, even then we are called to pass through seasons of severest testing. Temptation or trial comprehends all that puts moral fidelity to the proof. It may have for its end the manifestation and the strengthening of that fidelity. It is in this sense only that God is said to tempt (Gen. xxii. 1). Or it may have for its end our failure and overthrow, our captivity to sin. It is in this sense that God cannot tempt (James i. 13). But it is to this end that our great spiritual adversary always tempts us.

Now, if we would learn how to meet Satan's assaults, we must study our Lord's example when He was tempted of the devil in the wilderness. What our Lord accomplished on that occasion, let it be clearly understood, was not the vanquishment of Satan. He did not then conquer him, but He *withstood* him.

It is the testing of our Lord that we see here. It was at the cross that Satan was overthrown. Here he was repulsed. All his efforts to cause our blessed Lord to fail were utterly unsuccessful. So Satan leaves Him, but only for a season.

What took place there in the wilderness was the testing of the Second Adam. The fact was here made manifest that He perfectly endured the test—that He effectually withstood every assault—that He was proved to be worthy and fit to undertake the stupendous work the Father had given Him to do. The first man, Adam, did not stand the test; the second man, Christ, passed through the ordeal without

the least defect or flaw. Just as the pure gold withstands the chemical reagent applied to detect the alloy, so Christ passed through the trial, and withstood every assault. A besieged garrison in an impregnable fortress may succeed in so withstanding the enemy that the latter finally withdraws, utterly disappointed in his efforts, and yet he is not conquered. So we are exhorted to "withstand" the devil, standing fast in faith (1 Pet. v. 9).

It is by holding the ground of faith in Christ that we keep in the victorious position, and we abide in the impregnable fortress.

Let Christ, who is the "Armour of God," enclose the soul; let faith recognise that position and the impenetrable character of that armour, and Satan cannot hurt you. Then it is that "the Only Begotten of God (Christ) keepeth him (the believer), and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John v. 18).

"Wherefore take unto you the whole

armour of God, *that ye may be able to withstand* in the evil day, and having done all, *to stand*" (Eph. vi. 13).

Cap II

"AS DYING, AND BEHOLD WE LIVE"

IN these words, the Apostle refers, it would seem, primarily to the temporal life. He is speaking of his experience in meeting the trials and humiliations that the gospel entailed. But this is not all that the words import. They have doubtless a deeper and fuller significance.

It is not our only life that the world sees. Our true life, after all, is not that which is visible. "Our life is *hid* with Christ in God." "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Illustrations of this truth God gives us in the natural world. As a thoughtful writer says, "It has pleased Him to set some types of this great truth

even in objects that we see. There is a fruit-tree growing at your door. Wood, and bark, and leaves make up its visible figure. It has a definite lifetime. Every year it changes a little for the better or the worse. Watch it closely, let your eye be instructed by observation or science, and every season gives some sign that it is growing old. You or your father perhaps planted the seed; you or your son will gather the dead branches to burn them. The end is as certain as the beginning. And the process never ceases an instant. Does everything about the tree, then, perish? No. Underneath this visible form and colour that you can touch and see there is a mysterious power at work that you can neither touch nor see. It is the secret energy, the mysterious, vitalizing power, wonderfully intertangled in the fibre, and circulating in the sap, never tasted, never caught, never analysed, never described, which you can only call the principle of *life*. It

is what makes the tree. This does not perish, or grow old, or decay. When this particular tree has done its whole work, yielded all its fruit, shed its last leaf, and gone to the fire, that secret element of life is all hidden away in some seeds that survive. Another hand may plant them, and they again will grow, and, through the same beautiful cycle of germ, and root, and stock, and bough, and leaf, and flower, and fruitage, the undying power of life will fulfil its perpetual revolutions. You may say that while the outward tree perishes, hidden under that is an inward tree, which is renewed again and again." *

It is a law that belongs to our walk of faith, that life expands as death advances. "Always bearing about in the body the dying"—the putting to death—"of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2 Cor. iv. 10). The *living*, in the truest and highest sense, thus depends upon the

* Bishop Huntington.

dying. Conformity to Christ in His death is the condition in us of the manifestation of Christ in His life.

"I live, yet not I." A deep and potent principle is involved in that paradox. But how often it is misunderstood, and inaccurately stated, even by those who know something of the experience! "I am dead," said one not long ago; "I no longer exist—it is Christ that now lives in me." "Then there is no responsible person in you but Christ?" "Just so—I am altogether out of existence." "Indeed! Then when death comes to that body of yours, will you tell me who it is that goes to heaven?" There was no answer. A little quiet reflection convinced our friend that some modification was needed in the way of stating the truth.

"Christ liveth in *me*." It is needful to note not only the fact that it is Christ who lives, but also what is the sphere in which He lives. "In *me*."

This shows us that the personality does not cease to exist when the "self life" terminates. The "self life" is the product of two things, the "I" in the centre of the being. The "Christ life" also is the product of two things—the Christ in the centre of the personality—"in me." The "I" as the reigning, dominant power must die. The "me" as the receptive, dependent, yielded instrument, is not destroyed, but becomes the sphere of the transforming power of the living Christ.



Cap 12 *JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION*

NOTHING is more important than that the distinction and connection between Justification and Sanctification should be clearly seen and borne in mind. The great question which Justification meets is this : How shall the guilty past be put away ; how shall the sinner be accepted as just before God ? How shall I stand not only as forgiven, but as acquitted from every charge—as righteous before God ? Justification deals solely with the question of the sinner's *standing* —his position before a righteous Judge. Not a single step in the way of obedience or of service can be taken until that question is settled. Justification must there-

fore precede holiness of walk—it is the basis of Sanctification.

The great question which Sanctification answers on the other hand is this—How shall deliverance from the power of sin be known and realized as an ever-present reality? How shall the pardoned and justified soul walk with a conscience void of offence? How shall the soul who is free from sin's penalty—that is in a position in which "there is now no condemnation"—be brought to live in a condition of deliverance from sin's power? How shall he be kept continually in a condition of freedom from sin's service, and be led on progressively into a more complete conformity to the will of God? The Divine provision which meets this second great need is that which comes under the general head of Sanctification.

The two things, therefore, are clearly distinct. Justification relates to my standing—my judicial position before God,—and admits of no degrees, is perfect at once,

and can never be added to or increased. Sanctification, on the other hand, relates to my condition, life, walk, experience, and is capable of endless progress.

But while they are to be distinguished, they are not to be divided. Can we say that a man can be justified and be entirely destitute of even the first beginnings of Sanctification? Surely not!

It has been truly said, "He who is careless in respect to sanctification has no satisfactory evidence that he is truly justified."

The justified soul may be very imperfectly taught in the matter of sanctification. He may be but partially influenced by the power of the Spirit as to his thoughts, desires, and actions. The life of God may have actually quickened his soul, though he may be as yet but a feeble witness of the transforming power of Divine grace. He may need to be brought to a definite knowledge of Christ as his Sanctification. But this is a very different

thing from saying that a man may be justified years or months or days before he is sanctified. The two things cannot be divided without doing violence to the truth of God.

But in what sense is the term to be understood when it is said that Christ *Himself* is made of God unto us sanctification? It is not to a process that we are now directed. "Holiness may be regarded either as progressive—*sanctification*, or as a fixed quality—*sanctify*. The latter is the prevailing usage in the New Testament. It is to be so taken here. 1 Cor. i. 30." (Lange.)

Now, in order that the harmony between our position and condition should be sustained, we need to have Christ *in* us as our Sanctification, at the same time that He is *for* us as our Justification. The effect of His indwelling on our character and walk will be in proportion to our personal recognition of His presence, and our surrender to His sway. To reveal

Him to us, and to bring us into this attitude of submission, is the office and work of the Holy Spirit. This is the process of sanctification, and must not be confounded with that Divine Gift of Holiness which Christ is. The Holy Spirit sanctifies us by making the indwelling of Christ a reality in our experience. This is clearly put before us in that wonderful prayer at the end of the third chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. Observe the phrase, "that you may be strengthened with might by His Spirit." "Here is a something, then, that needs not illumination only, nor explanation, nor invitation, but *strengthening with might*, if Christ is thus to enter in. What does this imply? That this indwelling is a thing from which the heart without such strengthening shrinks—beneath the holy weight of which it would falter and succumb. As in other things, so in this, the Spirit must 'help our infirmities'; and here I see the truth that in this dwelling

of Christ in the heart there is involved that self-surrender which, without the Spirit's grace, is unwelcome, impossible, but which the Spirit makes to be a thankful opening of the doors in peace, to the infinitely worthy and welcome presence of the King. For if Christ inhabits the heart, it must be not only to console, but to take power and reign. And it needs a Divine force beneath our will to make us, without reserve and with open eyes, consent to this and welcome Him in." *

* *Thoughts on Christian Sanctity.* By Rev. H. C. G. Moule.



Cap 13

"KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD"

THAT was a true and heaven-born desire which was expressed by a believer of the primitive stamp,—"I do not want to possess a faith; I want a faith that shall possess me."

Very little influence comes from truths that we hold; that which touches the springs of our being, and transforms our characters, is the truth that holds us. Often it has been said by those who have come to inquire into the doctrines set forth at Conventions for the Deepening of Spiritual Life, "All this I have held ever since I became a Christian." Yes, that may be. It is wonderful how much

of precious truth we may hold without being influenced by it in the least. No, we do not want to hold more truth merely, we want to be held more thoroughly by the truth. It is then that the inner life and the outer conduct are transfigured. Filling the mind with the teaching of God's Word alone, will not lift the soul up out of the selfishness and earthliness of our lives. We must be possessed by the Holy Spirit of truth. Truth is to envelope and saturate us.

We are to walk "in the truth," if we would practise it. We must find our food and our atmosphere in the truth. Whatever reaches down to the sources of our being, touches the emotions of our nature, and changes the great central currents of our purpose, will affect the outward conduct, and transform the character. It is by possessing us that God conforms us to the image of His Son.

We may be born of God, and be par-

takers of the Spirit of God, without being fully possessed by Him.

The garrison cannot defend the citadel and effectually repel the enemy, if it has only partial possession of the fort. To be "kept by the power of God," we must be willing that every part of our being should be thrown open for Him to possess. "Being garrisoned in the power of God," to translate it literally, is the condition of the soul that is fully yielded to Him for safety and progress. Then it is we are held by the power of God. It is not so much that we hold God's power, as that we are enclosed and sustained by it. Then, again, Divine power, like Divine truth, is, in the highest and truest aspect, not a mere abstraction, but a person. "Christ, the Power of God," is the soul's enclosure. It is because there is weakness and impotence on every side of our being, that this Divine power must be present all around.

To be possessed rather than to possess

—let this be the uppermost thought in our hearts, as we seek for spiritual light and power.

The safest condition of soul is the feeling of complete dependence. The truest evidence of strength is the knowledge that all our weakness is being met by the presence of Him who is omnipotent. The weakness is not absolutely removed, but it is momentarily counterbalanced by the power of God. It is only in the sphere of human weakness that Divine strength can attain its fullest manifestation.

God is Himself the defence of those who put their trust in Him. "For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst" (Zech. ii. 5).

What is needed is faith to grasp this great reality. There is provided for the soul not merely a refuge, but a home. "Within this place of certain good" the soul may rest and find all its needs sup-

plied. But faith will be restrained and hindered if the soul shrinks from a full surrender. Let this be our prayer: "Lord, let me seek not only to have Thee, to lay hold of Thee, but to be possessed and filled by Thee."

Cap 14

THE RISEN CHRIST

THE resurrection of Christ marked a distinct advance in the knowledge and in the faith of the disciples. A complete revolution in thought and feeling may be said to have taken place within them at this time. The most wonderful and momentous fact of revelation was now made known to them. Another veil, so to speak, had been drawn aside. A new scene was now opened to their view. It is especially recorded that they "saw and believed." They were believers already. But facts, not before disclosed, were now unfolded to their view. And as these came within the sphere of their

vision, faith had fresh material to grasp and new ground to step out upon.

It was not from the teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures that they learned the fact of the resurrection, but it was from the fact of the resurrection that they were brought to understand the Scriptures. Up to this time it would seem they had no Scriptural knowledge of the doctrine, for it is expressly said, "As yet they knew not the Scripture that He must rise from the dead."

Certain "infallible proofs"—sure and unmistakable signs—were granted to these disciples. And seeing these, they believed. The whole mystery of the resurrection suddenly broke in upon them, with a force that was simply irresistible. They now saw what our Lord meant by the resurrection from the dead. Before this, it was utterly unintelligible to them. That wonderful fact, in all its supernatural reality, now dawned upon them. They saw it was not more

wonderful than true, as they exclaimed one to the other, with hearts full of joyous wonder, "The Lord is risen indeed!"

Let us consider those words, which were true of both disciples, but especially recorded of St. John, "And he saw, and believed" (John xx. 8). Let us ask,—

What was it that they believed, as something in addition to their former faith, on that the first morning of the resurrection? Well, they believed that our Lord was risen. Yes, but what did that mean? It meant that Christ had passed into a higher state of corporeal existence. It was not that He had become a Spirit, that He had passed into the disembodied state. That would not have been a resurrection at all.

It was not that He had been restored, after death, to His former state of existence. That would have been a backward step, which the resurrection was not. The resurrection was a fresh step in the

line of progress. This was not the case with the resurrection of Lazarus. He was brought back from the grave to his former state of life. He came back to this scene of suffering, of decay, and of death. He had to pass through the dark valley again.

Now, Christ's resurrection was something essentially different from this. It was not a backward, but a forward step. Death now had no more dominion over Him.

Consider what had taken place. Christ quitted the grave *in the body*. It was the same body in which He had tabernacled during those thirty years. It was the very body in which He had suffered—the body that had been nailed to the Cross. It was the same body, but not in the same condition.

He was still in a state of corporeal existence; but one in which He was superior to all physical limitations. So that He could pass through material

barriers, such as closed doors, and appear suddenly in the midst of His disciples.

He had risen from the natural to the heavenly state, so far as His body was concerned; from the mortal to the immortal, from the corruptible to the incorruptible. His body saw no corruption.

This change, let us especially bear in mind, took place *in the tomb*.

The body as it was laid in the sepulchre was natural; but when it rose from the dead it was spiritual or heavenly. It not only rose from the dead,—it rose above all those conditions of natural life which would hinder and restrain it.

Death was the portal through which He passed in order to enter into that state of existence. From henceforth death had no more dominion over Him. He had come to reach that stage. And it was this the disciples believed. "He is risen!" They believed before they could understand or explain. Something that they "saw" brought about this conviction. Let us ask,—

What was it they saw? Certain tangible proofs were granted unto them—signs or evidences that could not be mistaken. As they beheld these proofs, they were convinced that a supernatural change had come over His physical nature. They were convinced that He had not been removed from the tomb by man, but raised from the dead by the power of God.

It was not simply the fact that the tomb was *empty* that convinced them He was risen. That was but a negative evidence. It was something positive that assured them He had indeed risen from the dead.

Now, the common idea with regard to what is recorded in this passage (John xx. 3–10) is this: that these two disciples when they came to the tomb saw the "linen clothes" lying neatly folded up in one place, and the napkin which was bound round His head also neatly folded up and deposited in another place. In

other words, that our Lord had leisurely removed them, and then laid them neatly aside without haste or confusion. Or that the angels had done this.

But how would this convince them that Christ was risen? Any one who had carried off the body might have arranged the "linen clothes" in this manner.

But when we remember that His resurrection-body had the property of passing through all physical barriers without the slightest difficulty, where would be the necessity of removing these bandages at all? And it is this we believe actually took place: that the "linen clothes" were not taken off at all, but that He *passed through them!*

His spiritual body was unlike the body of Lazarus, which, though raised from the dead, was still natural. For him it was needful to have the grave-clothes removed. Hence the command, "Loose him, and let him go."

With this thought in our minds, then,

we would ask, What did these disciples see? They saw the linen winding-sheet, which had enfolded His body, still lying undisturbed in the exact place and position in which Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus had left it.

They saw the head-cloth or turban in the place by itself, where the head of the Lord had rested, still retaining its folds, wrapped together, as if it continued to encircle the head.

But, though they would see that the winding-sheet and head-cloth had been absolutely undisturbed, they would also see that the body was no longer there! And at once the question would arise in their minds, How could that body have been removed? It would have been simply impossible, these disciples would have seen, to have removed the body without disturbing the clothes that had wrapped Him. Only a power that was supernatural and Divine could have accomplished this. Here, then, they

would have a sign that was sure, infallible, and convincing of the reality of the miracle.

This interpretation gives peculiar force and attractiveness to the angel's invitation, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." We can imagine the angel saying, as he pointed to the end of the tomb, "It was here His head rested. See here the napkin that encircled His brow; it still retains its turban form. See there where He was laid; those "linen clothes" remain undisturbed, preserving still the shape of that lifeless body." "He is not here, but risen." Such were the infallible signs on which they gazed, and when they saw, they believed.

It was no mere matter of sentiment that moved the angel to say, "Come and see the place where the Lord lay." It was with a view to the intelligent instruction and strengthening of their faith.

Mary could no longer weep when she

grasped all that the angel intended her to take in.

Here was the crowning miracle of redemption. It was God who had raised Him from the dead. Let this great central fact occupy our thoughts; and as by faith we grasp it with greater firmness and simplicity, may our souls rise into a higher sphere of life and fellowship with Him who is the Risen One, the Lord of Life and Glory.



Cap 15 "THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE"

THESE words refer to Christ in His office of High Priest. The inspired writer of this epistle is speaking of Him in His resurrection-glory. It is to His life in that connection that he here refers. What difference, let us ask, is there in Christ's life before and after His crucifixion? Of each it may be said with equal truth, it was a perfect, a sinless, a holy, and "an endless life." His death could not terminate it. Death was utterly powerless to bring it to an end. But there are characteristics of His life from His resurrection to glory that do not belong to His life from the manger to the Cross.

It was a life from the dead. That

sprung out of death. It had from that point a new beginning. This is the life that links us to God. Union with God means becoming partakers of the resurrection-life of Christ. The life which is our pattern, we cannot follow until we partake of the life which is our power.

Our Lord declared that, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." Death is the door through which He passes to that life which unites us to Himself. Up to that point, though it was a life that was absolutely spotless and holy, it was a life that was "alone." The "much fruit" comes on the resurrection-side of the Cross.

Man needs something more than to behold the manifestation of this perfect life, which was both human and Divine. However much he may admire it, he cannot reproduce it by simply imitating it. He must have the life communicated to him, as well as unfolded to him, if he is to be "changed into the same image."

"The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." And the result of that quickening is union. "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit."

To this resurrection-life there belongs a power—"The *power* of an endless life." We soon discover that peace is not our only need. Besides the consolation and purity to be found in Christ, we need the power that belongs to His resurrection.

In all life, even in its lowest forms, there is power. The higher the nature of the life, the greater the power. This life of which we now speak is the life of God, and the power is the power of God.

To be filled with the life of the Risen Christ is to be energized by a supernatural force. Here is the secret of triumph over those obstacles of evil that continually meet us in the path of service. It is the secret also of growth. There can be no such thing as spiritual progress and development, without the putting forth of

those spiritual forces which have their source in Him who has risen from the dead. And the secret of our growth is also the secret of our fruitfulness. What then is needed in order that I should know the power of His resurrection? How may I be filled with that power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead?

It is not by forgetting our need of His death. We do not say "good-bye" to His crucifixion because we are brought into fellowship with His resurrection. On the contrary, the condition of realizing the efficacy of the latter lies in being made conformable to the former.

Identification with Christ on the Cross is the only way of knowing what it is to be in union and fellowship with Him as risen from the dead.

We may learn what the death of Christ means, long before we are ready to learn what His risen life can be to us. But we do not get away from the one because we pass on to the other. We need continu-

ally the power both of His death and of His life.

There is in His risen life the power that is able to lift us up out of the low-level experience of a doubting condition of mind, out of a selfish course of life, out of all worldly conformity.

It is a power that is "able to save." Shall we not seek earnestly to avail ourselves of it? Shall we not so submit ourselves to God that He may show us the reason of our failures? We are called out of the old way of living, that we may "walk in newness of life." But this cannot be unless we are being moved by the principles and powers that belong to Christ's resurrection. These are "new," because they are "without precedent in our experience." Let us seek to know more perfectly how the "exceeding greatness" of God's power was manifested towards Christ in His resurrection, and then let us recognise the fact that in that resurrection, we who believe are inti-

mately associated with Christ. Let us seek to "know," practically in our experience, that that power was not only put forth in Christ, but is "to us-ward who believe." So that we are "now in a state of *receptivity* towards that power." (Moule.)

Through His death we pass into the sphere of a new condition of things. "Behold all things are new." We have done with the old life; "the man of old" is dead and buried with Christ. We are now alive with God, with new powers of action, new aims and motives. In this sphere "all things are of God."

Cap 16 *"THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLETH IN YOU"**

AS we read these words we naturally regard them as applicable only to those who are whole-hearted and consecrated believers. Sometimes, in fact, we almost assume that a Christian in a low spiritual condition is destitute of the Holy Spirit altogether. We have heard it sometimes asserted that believers in the first stage of their Christian life, though under the *influence* of the Spirit, are not yet partakers of the *Personal* Holy Ghost! Should this article come under the notice of any who entertain this view, we would earnestly invite them to consider these

* 1 Cor. iii. 16.

words in the third chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians.

"Know ye not," says the apostle, "that ye are the temple of God?" "Well," it may be answered, "but the apostle was speaking of them in view of their calling, and according to that which once they had been. They were still the temple of God, but that temple was no longer inhabited by the Holy Ghost." The words that immediately follow show, however, that it was not in this sense at all that the apostle made this statement. He says, "and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" "Know ye not" this solemn and awe-inspiring fact? The Holy Ghost has not really left you—He is still within you.

The marvel stands out all the more conspicuously, when we keep steadily before us the real condition of these people to whom the apostle thus appeals in these words.

These Corinthian Christians, so far from being men and women who were distin-

guished for their spirituality, were sadly deficient in this very respect. What does he say to them? "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." He had recognised in them the possession of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. i. 5, 7), and yet with all this, there were emulations and strife among them. Even the preaching of the Gospel had been an occasion "for inflating themselves or disparaging others, and thereby tearing the Church into fractions, while satisfying their personal vanity." (Godet.) All this showed that though they were partakers of eternal life the flesh was dominant, "self-complacency still ruled the new life and the action of the Spirit in them." They were carnal—that is, mere babes in Christ.

Now it is concerning these carnal Christians that the apostle declares, "ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you."

In fact, with a view to raising them up out of their low condition, and of bringing them into that fulness of spiritual life that belonged to them, he begins by urging them to recognise the fact that the Holy Ghost was verily within them. "Know ye not that such is the great and wonderful fact, you are not your own? That body of yours is the temple of God. You belong to God. Nay, His Holy Spirit is dwelling in you." Look at your self-seeking, your pride and envy, in the light of that fact, and see the sin of continuing in this carnal condition. Is not this the true line to follow, if conscious of being in a low carnal condition of soul, we are beginning to feel the need of a truer, brighter, and more God-glorifying life?

Begin by recognising that if you are a Christian, you *have* the Spirit, the Personal Holy Ghost, and He is in you. But you are longing for *His fulness*. You desire to be possessed by Him, in every part of your being. Then as you recognise His

presence and indwelling, so now acknowledge His sway. Submit wholly and entirely to His sovereign rule. Let Him have every chamber of your being, every power and faculty of your mind, and let Him reign within you without a rival.

Recognise not only His presence, but His deity, and majesty, and glory, and His right of lordship over you. It is possible to be praying for the Spirit, and at the same time to dishonour Him by failing to recognise His presence. Here it is that faith is especially needed. Faith knows that He is present, and faith receives Him in His fulness. "Be *filled* with the Spirit" is a command to be obeyed by faith.

Cap 17

WHERE TO SEEK THE FULNESS OF THE SPIRIT

BY the "Church of Christ" we understand Christ's mystical body. A body implies a head. The Head of the body, which is the Church, is Christ. But Christ in what particular aspect? Not as on earth. Christ on earth before His resurrection was not the Head of the body. It is Christ in glory that we see Him in that relation.

On earth Christ stands before His Father in His individual capacity. There we see Him fulfilling His office as God's perfect servant, God's ideal of a perfect human life—the true sinless Man. In that capacity it behoved Him not only to be born of the Spirit, but to be baptized

of the Spirit. At the very commencement of His public ministry He was anointed of the Holy Ghost. He received the fulness of the Spirit. It was in the power of that Spirit that He wrought all His works, and fulfilled His Father's will. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts x. 38).

Of Christ's own baptism by the Spirit on earth the Church does not partake. That anointing was for Himself alone. But when we think of the Church and her participation in the fulness of the Spirit, it is to Christ as the glorified Son of man, on the right hand of the Father, that we have to direct our thoughts. It is not to Christ's anointing on earth, but to His anointing in heaven that we have to look. Observe how this was foreshadowed in *type*. We think of Aaron with "the mitre upon his head," and "the holy crown upon the mitre." We think of him robed in his garments "for glory

and for beauty." It was then that "the anointing oil" was poured upon his head. Aaron, we believe, typified not Christ alone, but Christ and His Church. That is the Head and the body. The inspired comment on the passage which we have in Psalm cxxxiii. clearly teaches us this: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments." Have we understood the meaning of that type, especially in its dispensational aspect? When was it actually fulfilled? Surely on the day of Pentecost?

Then let us notice the *statement* recorded in the Epistle to the Hebrews i. 9. It is a quotation from the Psalms: "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with gladness above Thy fellows." That those words

have reference to Christ there can be no doubt. But to what period in our blessed Lord's career do they refer? Was it whilst He was on earth, or when He was in heaven? Was it at the beginning, or at the end of His course? Unquestionably at the end; that is, after it had been shown, by His actual life of trial, that "He loved righteousness and hated iniquity." After He had passed through His probation. This brings us to the same point. The words point to what took place on the day of Pentecost, when Christ had ascended to the right hand of His Father. Once more, look at the actual *fulfilment of the promise*, as it is recorded in Acts ii. 33: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear."

"The promise of the Father" was the promise of the Holy Ghost. To whom was that promise made? Emphatically

to Christ. Not directly to the disciples, or to the Church. And so when the promise was fulfilled, it was fulfilled emphatically to Christ, as the Head of the body. The anointing oil that flowed down to the skirts of Aaron's garments was poured on Aaron's head. None of it reached the body that had not first been poured on the head. Blessed and significant fact! It was then, when He entered into the glory, that He received this anointing. "Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost," it was then that He poured forth the same anointing on the members of His body, the Church.

That great transaction took place on the day of Pentecost. "The promise of the Father" then, let us clearly understand, was there and then fulfilled to Him to whom the promise was made.

Christ has ever since then been to the Church the great Emporium of all Holy Ghost power and fulness. It pleased the

Father that in Jesus Christ should all the fulness of the Spirit dwell. If we, as individual believers, are conscious that we have not the fulness of the Spirit, let us not plead the promise of the Father, for that promise has been fulfilled, but let us yield ourselves unto Christ to be filled full—let us receive, and receive at once, that which God hath already bestowed upon Christ for us. No, we have not to wait for and plead "the promise of the Father," but we have to obey the command: "Be filled with the Spirit." Christ is to-day, as truly as in the days of John the Baptist, nay, in a far truer sense than He was then, "He that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."

As He is the Emporium of all spiritual power and fulness, so He is the Dispenser of the same to all who earnestly seek that blessing.

There may be hindrances which stand in the way to our obeying the command: "Be filled with the Spirit." But we

should seek, by prayer, and definite consecration of heart, the *immediate* removal of those hindrances. Let these be removed, let nothing remain, not even unbelief, to close the avenue of reception, and at once that fulness will fill the heart, that anointing will rest upon the soul, which is the secret of all spiritual illumination, purity, and power.

Dear reader, are you *filled* with the Spirit? Has the Holy Ghost full sway in your soul? Let this be our great concern, that we may be men and women who are habitually "full of the Holy Ghost."

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